

## In the Flesh

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# In the Flesh

by [Senri](#)

## Summary

Swallowed – he'd been swallowed. He was back in the stomach, he'd never left. Still drifting in the blood-hot, stew-thick boil of the titan's belly, and he could hear again the other soldier, the stranger swallowed before him, crying out *Mommy!!* But he'd gone away from himself – been out of it. They must be dead by now, right? Right??

That was all that waited for him too. The freedom granted by a slow death.

Or, Eren wakes up in a titan again. The second verse is not the same as the first.

## Notes

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Happy birthday to Zoe Hange, humanity's weirdest and my beloved fave of all time! Here's one for the Eren+Hange mentorship canon didn't give us.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

## Training incident September 850

An eyeblink. A failed gasp. Starting in nothingness, arriving into soupy, pressing dark. Sweltering, smothering, sweating, dripping all around. Something clutched his face, tugging his skin as he tried to move. Hooks in his skin. Roots.

Swallowed – he'd been swallowed. He was back in the stomach, he'd never left. Still drifting in the blood-hot, stew-thick boil of the titan's belly, and he could hear again the other soldier, the stranger swallowed before him, crying out *Mommy!!* But he'd gone away from himself – been out of it. They must be dead by now, right? Right??

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His limbs twitched. Two legs, two arms – intact. He kicked out and the flesh around gave, mushy as a rotten peach but offering no leverage to help fight his way free.

He clenched his fists; tissue pulped against his fingers. It stank in here, hot metal stench – no – blood stench. The scream tore out of him with the desperation of a bird flying for the first light it saw.

Who was he screaming for? Armin? Mikasa? *Mommy* in his turn? Why even bother, if he was already eaten?

There was no reason not to bother screaming. It was too hot not to scream. If he couldn't do anything else, he could scream out to mark his last moments, one last big, pointless surge of himself, delivered to a void that didn't give a fuck.

Blind in that dark, he was blinded. Breathing was hard, he was suffocating, his chest was compressed. He'd lost the thread the moment he screamed. He didn't want to die this way, he didn't want to die here, he'd made promises, he'd worked so hard, he'd trained side by side with his friends, and in the years they toiled on the farms, the years they stumbled in the dirt and got up every time, the years they clambered up cliff faces while the instructors tormented them with dropped rocks and cut safety lines, the years tangled in the tactical gear while he tried not to fatally wrap himself around a tree, years poking his bruises and popping his blisters, he'd determined to himself that he could not just die, he would not *let* himself just die, he would go further than that –

He took his last gasp. It was so hot.

“Eren!”

What?

“I see him! I see the crown of his head! Eren? Can you talk? Turn your head if you can hear me.”

What? What??

“He’s not responding.” He felt his hair move. Someone had touched his head.

He tried to breathe. It was so hard, a vice seemed to clamp round his chest, but he was breathing, shallow breaths, panicky breaths, the air so humid he could’ve drunk it.

“HELP!” Garbled, but the noise ripped out of him loudly enough he was sure someone must’ve heard something. He twisted back and forth. Everything around was slippery, things squirted away when he tried to grasp him. He was restrained in some kind of larger structure, a web, a hammock of fibrous tissue - tendons? muscle? - that tore like wet bark against his thrashing.

Madness. Insanity, for them to have dug into a titan like this – they were in so much danger – “RUN! GET AWAY!”

“Oh, he’s talking! He’s – yelling! I see you, Eren! I’ve got you – I see him! Oh, it’s really grown over, look, look –“

He had no idea what that bright voice could be chattering about. But it did seem to bring a breeze with it, a cool breeze that licked over his nape.

Eren closed his eyes – a darkness that made no difference – and bucked his whole body. Whip crack, putting his shoulders in it, head forced down, horrible pull on his face when he tried to lift it. Still tied down, tangled in. Integrated. Roots grown into his marrow. He’d rip his face off, his own bones out, if he fought too hard.

“*Eren!* Stop moving!”

Hange. It was Section Commander Hange’s voice. He recognized her now, still talking: “Oluo, extend the cut a bit – if we align it right I think we can just pull him out – just cut, let’s not extract him yet —“

“Sectioner? Sectioner?” he moaned.

His own voice sounded bubbly and muffled to him.

His arms were still bound, hard to move. Wrapped in flesh. Titan flesh. His own flesh. He’d just forgotten, because he’d had a blackout.

Dizzy... he felt so dizzy. Blood pounded in his ears, hard enough to blow out his eardrums or explode his head.

Another blackout, after almost killing Mikasa in the first one. And then he had to wake up in this body, the body of the loathed enemy. *Soulless predator. Scourge of humanity.*

His stomach felt so hot. His body wanted to let go, vomit or faint or piss itself. It was hot enough in here he couldn’t tell if he HAD pissed himself. How could he have let it happen? How could he have gone away from the world again?? The world spun in a familiar way. Sometimes in his bunk in the trainee quarters he’d get bad vertigo for no reason he could tell, just from lying under his blankets with his eyes closed. The barracks would twirl around him, the grounds, the whole world spinning, endlessly spinning, all of it leaning in, teetering over,

collapsing, compressing itself, falling into a dense point located at the exact center of his forehead. On those bad nights of vertigo he learned if he just opened his eyes he could make existence stop wobbling, settle the world, feel less sick.

Now he couldn't open his eyes. His eyes had been open at some point, he could deduce this because he'd closed them, and he could deduce that he'd closed them because before he'd come into this hell he had seen things, including sunrises, sunsets, trees, Mikasa's and Armin's and Annie's faces, he was sure of that. But now he could see nothing, and either way there was no light, not even the low glimmer of a lantern, or moonlight drawing a square on the barracks wall. He could grasp neither anchor nor release.

Maybe it would always be this way. No escape. His stomach cramped, his throat burned, his bladder spasmed.

A hand was slipping around to cup his throat. It was still so dark and so hot even the warmth of the hand felt cool, and the motion peeled some flesh away from him, better than his hooked-fish thrashing had done. "I'm with you," Section Commander Hange declared. "Don't move a centimeter!"

"Sectioner..."

"What is it, kiddo?" She was so close to him, voice right next to his ear.

"I think I'm blind."

"What? No – no, I don't think so. That wouldn't make sense. You've never been blinded by transformation before. It's just a bunch of flesh! It grew over your face. Boy, it is really on you! Let me just –"

The pulling sensation on his face became terribly acute. For a moment it was nearly unbearable, then some weight dropped away. Still no light for his eyes, but a lighter yoke for him.

"There. I just gave you a shave, hah! Better?"

He could hear other voices, recognize them, now. Petra snapped at somebody, probably Oluo; Eld spoke in a calm tone that dispelled whatever argument.

"Sectioner..."

It came out a slushy moan, only two syllables, as scouts spoke the title when speed was what mattered most. *Seckshner*. He wanted to cry. He was in more fluid now, hot and metallic-tasting. Blood. Drinking in – drowning in – his own blood.

"It's all right. We have you. Talk to me, hm? Just stay with me." The Section Commander clapped his shoulder, or at least seemed to attempt it. He felt the pressure distantly, as if he was under several layers of blankets. "Amazing, it's like an umbilical cord... when I cut the tissue, it started pouring out blood. I bet it carries oxygen to your body when you're in the nape. I'd wondered how you didn't suffocate."

His titan's blood steamed away near instantly in the air, which after a moment's dredging up memories – he'd shifted in early afternoon – he could recall as being crisp. The refreshing weather didn't do much for him now; hot blood splashed around his trapped face and lapped up to his ears before it was gone, rushing up and sizzling to nothing, rushing and sizzling. Roasting him in frissons of intolerable heat. The steam, the steam... he was sweating like crazy, drenched, breathing in a fog of evaporating blood.

"Get me out of here," he said, then begged her: "Cut more."

"Hang tight, Scout. We're getting there. I'm going to open things out a bit more for you. Want your eyes free?"

"Please... yes, please."

Snip, snip. A weird sensation: flesh pulling on his eyelids as the Section Commander incised her cuts. A close shave. He could feel the pull on his skin lessening with each careful slice.

"You're going to feel me," the Section Commander said. "I don't want to cut it too close. I'm going to use my hands, I think I can peel the rest off your eyes."

She began peeling flesh off him. Eren endured it, and the Section Commander was not too rough, clever fingers probing into the meat adhered to his forehead, temples, finally his eyelids, little by little stripping it all away in a series of sharp tugs with a pause after each one. The rhythm of pull and slack reminded him of crows picking flesh off of corpses and felt horrendously like they'd rip his skin, then his eyelids, right off; but both his skin and eyelids stayed on.

At last his eyes found light, he could open them after all, and there it was: Section Commander Hange's face. Sharp, bony, foxlike; close, inquisitive, mostly calm, goggles fogged with the steam of his foaming, insistently-boiling blood.

He could raise his head now, far enough to see the carved-away flesh around himself, neatly sliced, laid out like flower petals, or the cuts of meat that would frame the centerpiece of a feast. In this arrangement, Eren himself was the centerpiece. Blood seemed to come from everywhere still, enough blood that even with his increased range of motion, he couldn't lift his head far enough to escape it. It surged over his lips and chin. He knew the taste of his own blood, and the titan's blood tasted the same, though it was hotter. The blood poured out of the ropy twists of tissue around him in rhythmic pulses. Surging, steaming to nothing, rising again in a flood. He could see what had half-drowned him before, the blood which was bubbly, nearly black, with a red glint in it.

"You've got a blood beard," the Section Commander informed him. "At least while it lasts. It evaporates in an instant, but as you can see, it gets replaced fast!"

If he laid limp, he'd have to rest his face against the arch of flesh before him, that arch raised up by a vertebrae. He'd have to put his face back in the bloody meat. Nothing could have sounded more awful. "Sectioner," he said, hearing how high-pitched he sounded, not normal. "Please help me. I can't rest and it's..."

“Oh,” the Section Commander wiped her goggles, glancing over it all, “a mess, huh? I can see what you mean. Here, kiddo.”

She pulled on her cloak ties. In a moment, green wool bundled under his face. Eren rested his cheek against it: the light, soft-scratching wool of a scout’s summer cloak. It was damp with the steam and soaked through in an instant, but it insulated him from his flesh.

Now he could rest. He breathed and enjoyed breathing, and his swirling panic and the churned-up memories of the inside of the titan’s belly started to come under his control. He knew where he was, and where he’d been, and the best thing about that was there was a clear division between then and now. He was not in the past, helpless in the stomach; instead he’d reached the forefront of uncharted territory. He was helping the scouts to learn. He was helping the Section Commander.

He felt wrung-out still, sodden, shaky, recovered moments before death. Each inhale tasted humid and felt like something powdery had been blown into his mouth and now coated his lips, teeth, tongue, and throat. Still the air tasted sweeter than he’d ever dreamed it could – as sweet as it must have tasted the first time his own titan’s body spit him out of its nape, though he’d fainted and couldn’t really relish it at the time.

“I see sublimation is beginning to occur around your extremities. I mean the titan’s extremities. That’s interesting, since you’re still, eh... hooked in. How are you feeling, Scout?”

“Thirsty,” he said, closing his eyes. The cloak stuck to his face like a membrane.

With his head turned and pillowed on the cloak, when the waterskin kissed up against his lips he only had to open his mouth the barest bit to sip. Water, still with the deep-earth chill of the well, faintly sweetened with honey, lightened with mint.

He drank, water spilling out of the corners of his mouth. Dripping like a baby. He drank, then he couldn’t hold the words in. “It’s hot,” he said, hating the little wobble in his voice. “It’s really hot in here.” Without comment, the Section Commander began pouring the remaining water over his hair and neck – precious honey and all. His skin tingled.

“Thanks,” he said, when he felt the flow dwindle. To his surprise the Sectioner gave his hair a ruffle, rucking it up into wet spikes.

“You’re taking it like a champ, Eren. Why don’t you describe everything you’re feeling to me? It’ll pass the time faster.”

“It’s hot. Like I’m in quicksand, or stew... I’m being cooked. It’s just like we get cooked when they swallow us.” He wouldn’t have minded resting, waiting the whole thing out, not saying a word til it was over, but any information he could share might be valuable, right? In one of their prior debriefs the Sectioner, eyes bright, had insisted that was true. “It’s tight in here. I couldn’t breathe when I came back, or, or woke up, I mean.”

Section Commander Hange was quick on her feet, in constant motion, and she liked to talk. Her presence was a flickering torch that set the light in the room dancing. But when she

listened it was so quietly that he could almost forget she was there. He had to turn and look and make sure she hadn't slipped off and left him chatting with nobody, but when he did look there she was, sitting next to the wound that cradled him, leaning forward, face closer to his than he'd imagined, smiling at him in a fond and easygoing way.

Eren tried to smile back. First his lips felt trembly, then the expression seemed to set. He could maintain it.

"Before you awoke. You lost time before, isn't that right? While you were moving the boulder?"

"I think so. I was dreaming." That much he could say for sure. Collapsed back against a building like even the enormous titan's body was just a thrown doll (Armin had told him; he couldn't remember), imagining himself in a time and place that had vanished from the world (which he had whispered to Armin and later told the Sectioner). "I don't remember dreaming this time."

"Interesting... we need to work on keeping you lucid through the shift. Do you remember what you were thinking about when you regained consciousness? What were you feeling?"

He didn't want to admit it, pressed his lips to the Sectioner's cloak, which had probably seen and soaked up as much cumulative blood, snot, vomit, piss, and other generalized filth as some scouts currently in service. But this was for humanity, not for him.

"Scared," he admitted. "Remembering when the titan ate me. That was before I changed for the first time."

The Sectioner ruffled his hair again. Into the cloak Eren said, "Please don't tell Oluo. Or Jean."

"Don't worry, kiddo. Nothing you tell me is set to be generally released info for a good long while."

"Did I hurt anyone today?"

"No. We got on you quick."

His hands were still gloved in titan flesh, but he'd torn it before and now when he restlessly fidgeted the flesh gave away. He could move his hands around in there, over slippery pillows of bundled muscle. It felt like he'd been tucked in under all the blankets and quilts in the house on a hot summer night, and now the sheets were soaked with sweat, almost slippery, and all the bedding was heavy on top of him, hindering his motions, stopping his escape.

He hadn't thought of it for a long time, but before Wall Maria fell, his family – including Mikasa by that time – had gone on holiday. Sinawards, to the great lake. The memory emerged: himself sitting on the shore, trailing his fingers through the warm sand, squeezing, bearing down on handfuls of warm powder, the same way he clutched his fingers in the squishy muscle now. A memory sun-warmed and soft, of an irrecoverable time and place, more and more lost with every day that inserted itself between him and the past.



He was a long way from lakeside vacations. Maybe he'd never relax by the water again, but the memory of the softness, the sand's warmth, the silky push of the grains around his fingers, around his legs when he buried them in the sand, it all made him think.

While he'd been thinking, the Sectioner had been moving around. Now she stretched out next to him, not quite ensconced (like he was) in the open wound that allowed him to breach into open air. She had one arm folded with her head resting on it, like she was lying down for a nap. Her other arm reached into the wound, and her free hand grasped one of those umbilical twists of meat which had so recently attached to Eren. That she fondled gently, twisted through her fingers, held. He and Armin might have relaxed together sharing a textbook with Armin in a posture similar to Hange's, in a situation not unlike this, except in the hundreds of ways it was completely not like this at all.

"Can you feel that, Eren?"

"No," he said, then he asked his own question. "Sectioner, how come these things – the muscles – grow more around my face than my hands? I can move my hands now, and I actually could before, I tore the meat around them, but you had to cut them off my face."

His hands were smaller, thinner. They'd be more easily swallowed.

"Is that so? Hm, good question, kiddo! I'm afraid I can't give you conclusive answers, but I see a few options. One: you've been partway out for a bit, and you were disoriented to start with. Maybe your hands were held tighter at the beginning, and the grip has loosened since I cut part of you out. Maybe it was always like this, and, well, you were panicking and it seemed worse than it was. Two, when those cords grow to your face, they're much closer to your brain. You're controlling your titan, so the titan body has to interface with your brain somehow. Maybe there's nerves in this meat as well as venous tissue..."

"But," he whispered, "not always."

"Hm, in control?"

The Sectioner was so close by his side, they could both have been passengers in the nape.

Eren nodded.

"Not yet, at least."

When the Section Commander said it, she sounded sure. She sounded like she could see a future where he was in total control of himself, where he knew exactly what he was doing. She bumped his shoulder with her elbow, squeezed in closer, still holding that tissue cord, and Eren fixed his eyes on it and felt his jaw clamp down, his teeth grind, no input required to instigate the reaction besides that sight. The sight of titan flesh.

Those ropes of flesh were too thick to be wormy. More like slugs, leeches, leeches that vomited blood into his body instead of slurping blood out of him.

Awful things. Things that had nearly smothered him. His stomach felt hot when he looked at the one the Sectioner held, at the others splayed around him. His neck felt hot.

Hatred. Hatred. Hatred for the source of this heat.

How he hated them, these pieces of body that had chosen him, had appended themselves to him. Somehow, out of every other human crushed between titan's teeth. Him, the one who hated them most of all.

"Sectioner." He squeezed it out. It almost hurt to talk, his teeth hurt, his jaw hurt. "What does it mean? If I can be a titan like this? What does it mean about the – other ones?"

The ones that shambled outside the walls. The ones that bit trees or the edges of wall-substance when they looked at humans, or burred like happy babies as they ground flesh up in their teeth.

The monsters that had killed his mother, not to mention lots of other people he'd known and cared about. His mother. Marco. Mina. Franz. Many, many more.

The Sectioner had a face that seemed to want to smile. Eren had seen her enough to know that when her expression fell back to neutral, she probably felt affable, so the chill look she gave him felt like a startling jolt of cold, a shock just like dunking his head in the rain barrel after a rough training would've been.

"That," she said, "is the question of the century. Do not ask it casually, Scout. Don't ask it where people besides our top brass can hear you at all, actually." She paused. "And by *our*, I mean *Scout*."

Not for the unicorns or the rose guard. A question that was borderline treason. Whether he was a death-seeking blockhead or not he could see that much, and in spite of the swelter, gooseflesh pimpled his body. Heretical thought, even if they were all heretics already for wanting to go outside the walls. The kind of thinking people got shot for.

This was because of him. This disruption between the scouts and their brother and sister soldiers, an interruption like a heart failure, one affliction his father had been powerless to relieve.

But this was what he'd wanted, wasn't it? The company of eccentrics who fought for what they believed in and damn all else.

"Just hang in there, okay? You're doing a great job, you'll be humanity's savior yet! We just have to get past the rough bits, eh?"

He wished he could take her hand. Hold onto another human who had the same investment in as few people getting eaten alive as possible as he did, even if she was an aberrant type. Hange, with her free hand, scuffled her fingers through his hair. It didn't surprise him this time.

“Almost done with it. Like a champ.” They rested so close together, he didn’t have to look to know Hange had turned her head. “I’m here for you, Eren. You don’t have to solve this problem on your own. There’s no need to wallow in ignorance when we can do research. We’ll figure this out. We can help each other. I’m going to help you. You’re going to help me.”

She spoke to him in earnest. A veteran of human-versus-titan combat, a titan researcher with more than a decade’s worth of field experience. More than twenty expeditions ridden. New weapons developed, new theories inscribed. The trainee textbook written, literally.

This adept was holding out her hand in camaraderie, extending trust to him. Reaching out with belief in him. It made his throat clench, his entire body hurt.

“Okay,” he whispered, it was all he was capable of.

“Good.”

Hange rolled away with him. Then she fetched up with a gasp. He knew that sound, he’d heard it from his friends and from himself – something caught her up, caused her pain. He turned her way. “Sectioner?”

She was on her back, her forearms folded against her chest, a weird smile curving her lips. “Ahh. Ahhhh.” That tendril of flesh still in her hand. It made no sense for a second. When she’d rolled, her hand further from him had been brought nearer. When she raised that hand to him then he could see, even if he didn’t understand it at all – at least, not yet.

“It’s stuck, Eren,” she said helpfully. And when he blinked and looked again he could begin to see.

At a glance he could’ve thought her fingers had grown a webbing between them, like a frog’s, but that was wrong – it was from him, or it was like what had grown around him. It was his titan flesh, grown onto her hand, annealed to her fingers. It looked like scar tissue, colored an inflamed-looking red. Hange raised her pinky and ring finger – they had range of motion, at least. Her pointer and index fingers twitched. They were sealed to his muscle, his veins, that peninsula of flesh that was and wasn’t his, that part of him which had reached out to colonize another person’s fingers, maybe her palm too. He couldn’t see enough to tell how much she was ruined.

Eating her. It wanted to eat her as much as it wanted to eat him, this body of his – the unending hunger of the titan, with the entry point the nape, not the mouth.

He really wanted to throw up. He had to swallow and think of peppermint, peppermint tea, peppermint sweets, the taste fresh and cleansing, nothing like meat, soaking under his tongue, chilling his throat. That was the only thing that saved him from puking.

His body eating a human even when that was the last thing he wanted. His body, out of his control, again. His voracious, thoughtless body. The body of a brute.

“Your hand,” choking out the words. Weak-voiced. He couldn’t take his eyes off the graft. The destruction of someone’s hand was probably a career-ending injury. “Cut off the titan part.”

Hange looked him in the eye. Indecipherably, her eyes were numinous. A weird smile opened her mouth, a fox’s grin, euphoric. “It’ll be alright, Eren,” she breathed it out. “Would you look at that. Could anyone have ever guessed something like *this* would happen? How fascinating!”

## From the personal journals of Section Commander Zoe Hange, September 850

[...] so here, as they say, we stand: scouts at the precipice again, encroaching unexplored territory. Some will counsel we should be afraid but what kind of scout would turn away this opportunity? This is what we are made for. This is where we always wished to be. This is more of the same work we have already done, stretching out like the land beyond the walls – and doesn't every scout love to ride out there?

He has such potential and there is so much we can learn. From our experiments today I already have more ideas, avenues I look forward to exploring! For example: while I rested with him, while he was partially freed from the nape, blood poured out from the titan's severed tissues. At first it erupted in a torrent, but I noticed that after some time, the spurts emerged in a predictable rhythm. Perhaps we can deduce that these explosions of blood come in time with the titan body's heart contracting? It is a recorded matter of fact that a larger beast's heart beats more slowly than that of a small beast, so perhaps it is the same with Eren and his titan. Designing an experiment to explore the question would be trifling, trifling enough to be worth doing.

I gave him a drink from my waterskin. The poor kid came back to his mind panicking, a reasonable enough reaction since if he rampages we are all endangered. Unrelated to his conscientiousness though - a drink was simple enough to calm him down. The most cutting-edge research on disease transmission and treatment is taking place through the hard work of scientists and doctors in the Underground, and through their hard work the argument that human disease can spread through close bodily contact and shared fluids has been lent further credence. If we agree that particles exuded by the human form can spread disease, could titan shifting be passed on in a similar manner? Could we produce more soldiers with Eren's abilities, to render him less alone, and make humanity's victory more likely? I must propose further experiments in this vein to Erwin.

Eren says enough to me that I know he is observing our world closely and thinking similar questions over himself. He is right to ask what his own transformation means for the titans we have fought over the years. And his existence raises many old questions anew. If the titans we know are indeed transformed humans, where have these poor souls come from? How are they packed, processed, or integrated into these bodies? Where does their human form go?

A frightening line of thought. The sort of idea that gets some people extrajudicially executed!

But I am among friends here! So let's not beat around the brush further – let's explore what we can think of to its fullest extent, and inscribe these letters without fear!

Today, when I was in contact with the inner flesh of Eren's titan, it grew over me like ivy on a wall! When I got cut free of his flesh, it withered away and fell off like a dead umbilical cord in a matter of minutes. Perhaps this hints as to the fate of those humans who become titans. They are overrun, one might even say digested, by that voracious flesh.

But as has been clearly seen Eren himself transforms from titan to human and pops out fresh as a daisy, perfect each time. So we see that whatever transformation occurs, it is reversible after all. So let us write the word.

**Detitanization. Detitanization. Detitanization.**

An ugly word. Doesn't ring like a bell. But if the results are beautiful, I think we could love the ugly mechanism and the hideous vernacular.

**Detitanization.** A shift in equilibrium from titan to human.

Four times writing the word. Now I will call it, it.

If a way were found to perform it, how would we even begin the work? Would the King and Sina's nobles ever accept those refugees, when they're barely even willing to foster our own displaced?

If we could perform it, what would we learn? Where would those people have come from? What could they teach us?

How could we perform it? Could we introduce some sort of chemical that turned the tables, a medicine that digested the titan body away? How does Eren emerge from the titan intact? What is the composition of his blood? What is the composition of his saliva? What organs does he have, what novel biological processes does he possess, compared to a human that cannot transform? He is the key, one way or another. I am sure of it.

But I have to admit it. The scared bunnies aching to jump back down their holes aren't in the wrong: a titan shifter is dangerous. Eren is dangerous. We must refine his control, refine him further. We were lucky today that no one was killed when he lost control, but there is so much possibility for disaster, even excluding accidental deaths. So much of this world is mysterious to us, so much goes unseen. The mysteries of his body are no lesser in magnitude. He can be a titan, and as a titan he is dangerous in the way they always are. It took less than ten minutes of uninterrupted touch for that titan flesh to begin its consumption of me: not via the standard path, ground between teeth and forced down the gullet, but externally digested. A more direct path in a way. An incorporation of my flesh into its own.

That flesh recognized me as a piece akin to it, a missing piece that would be better drawn into the whole. That body would swallow me if it could, I'd bet my eyes on it. It would rope me in as a kidney, and Levi in as a spleen, and Erwin in as the heart, and who knows who else. It would consume us all, Eren not disincluded.

But we must not be driven by fear. He doesn't control that body's functions, just as I don't tell my body when to digest food, or when it needs a shit. My body is a neutral actor and so is his.

If I put my human flesh in range where the titan can acquire it, it seeks to consume me, one way or another – like if you put me in range of pork, I try to consume pork. We all want a bite to eat. Eren's human body and his titan body and me and every other human in the walls

have that in common. And we can explore it more, we can explore more of what he can do, and better understand the pitfalls, the shortcuts, the miracles.

At least the things that seem like miracles now. The wondrous things we cannot yet comprehend.

Imagine what it must be like! With the tactical gear we are familiar with a vantage point ten meters in the air or higher, but imagine dispelling with the harness and the gas tanks and the precariousness of the perch and the fear of the fall and striding over the surface of the earth at ten meters tall! Imagine being able to keep pace with horses, rip off roofs as you're called on to do it!

What a life it must be. If I could think, write, publish, and design experiments as a titan's kidney, I'd cut him open, crawl in, and wait for incorporation without complaint.

But even this dream that others might call extreme is merely a failure of ambition. Why be a part when, were the gift mastered, we could all enjoy titan shifting? Why sit blindly in the abdomen as an organ, when I could ride at the head of the beast myself? Because of course I must admit I envy him! Of course I wish I were the one gloved in that steaming-hot flesh!

Perhaps that is the dream of the best possible world we could create - a dream where all humans stand as giants when they wish, where human and titan shifter construct a shared future hand in hand.

## End Notes

I welcome comments, and if it's helpful or if you're so inclined I like to know these things about my fics:

1. Were there any bits where you skimmed?
2. Were there any parts where you were confused?
3. Were there any parts you especially liked?

Thanks for reading!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!